

The Cambridge Bicycle Committee

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Committee Chairman

The Cambridge Bicycle Committee is one of the oldest and most established bicycle advisory committees in the state of Massachusetts. The Committee has been active and successful in guiding the City of Cambridge towards becoming a more bicyclist friendly and supportive community. This document is designed to provide some sense of how the Bicycle Committee fits within Cambridge city government, how the committee has developed from its beginnings in 1991, and how the committee has worked to improve bicycling in Cambridge and city life in general.

Introduction

Makeup of the Committee

The citizen members who make up the bulk of the Bicycle Committee either work or live in Cambridge, thus representing the many facets of the city's diverse residential and professional population. The Committee has representatives from the Departments of Public Works, Police, Traffic and Parking, and Community Development. The Committee works most closely with the Environment and Transportation Program in Community Development. As the most involved member of the city staff, Cara Seiderman is an integral part of the Committee, fulfilling the responsibilities of coordinating bicycle and pedestrian issues in the city. Other Committee members are official representatives from MIT, Harvard University, and other institutions.

What the Committee does

The main Committee meets publicly in city facilities once per month. The Committee reviews city plans for road construction, comments on pending bicycle-related ordinances, participates in public events, creates materials to encourage bicycling in the city, conveys the opinions of other neighborhood and community groups of which members are a part, and interfaces to other bicycling organizations at the local, regional, state, and national level. Subcommittees meet when necessary to address more specific issues, including technical review, public relations, education, and enforcement.

Cambridge Bicycle Committee historical time line

Committee members help the city to perform bicycle and pedestrian traffic counts to plan and evaluate new facilities. We work with the city staff and police to design material that promotes bicycling through information and education. We also appear at City Council meetings and other public discussions as officially-appointed advisors on bicycle related topics. The fact that the City of Cambridge listens to and respects our opinions, confers with us on a wide range of issues, and supports and carries through on many of our recommendations is one of the Committee's major accomplishments.

Cambridge City Government A short description of city government helps put the Bicycle Committee's role in perspective. Cambridge has a "City Manager" form of government, where a City Manager is hired by City Council to handle the day-to-day operations of Cambridge. The City Manager's Office is the executive branch of government. All city staff report to the City Manager, including the Police Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Traffic and Parking. The City Manager also appoints the members of citizen advisory committees such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees.

City Council is the elected policy-making arm of Cambridge city government, authorizing public improvements and expenditures, adopting regulations, levying taxes, controlling finances and city property, and performing other legislative tasks. Council is elected using a Proportional Representation voting method every two years. The mayor of Cambridge is a member of the Council selected by Council vote. With regard to bicycles and bicycle-related issues in the city, the Council holds public hearings to discuss matters related to public safety and transportation needs. Council also has jurisdiction over public areas such as the Cambridge Common that are heavily bicycle-traveled.

Cambridge Bicycle Committee historical time line

The following section provides a historical progression of how the Cambridge Bicycle Committee has developed from the early efforts of concerned citizens to an important part of bicycling in the City of Cambridge.

May 1991 After lobbying by Andy Rubel and other concerned members of the bicycling community, Mayor Alice Wolf appoints the mayor's bicycle advisory committee to advise the city on bicycling-relating issues. Andy and others on the committee lay out a bicycle action plan, including proposals for a permanent advisory committee, hiring a bicycle pedestrian coordinator, and writing a bicycle safety plan. The committee meets at city hall and other sites in the city.

Oct 1991 City Council approves the establishment of a permanent bicycle advisory committee.

Feb 1992 The Cambridge Bicycle Committee meets for the first time. City representatives (from the departments of Public Works, Traffic and Parking, Police, and the Environmental Program) to the committee are appointed. Cara Seiderman, a

Cambridge Bicycle Committee historical time line

staff member in the neighborhood planning department who assisted the mayor's committee, is given the responsibility of bicycle and pedestrian coordination.

Aug 1992

Cambridge passes the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance (see description) as a means to comply with federal clean air regulations. Initial annual funding for bicycle-related activities is set at \$25,000 (not including staff salaries).

1993

Start of the first major city planning project engaged with strong support from all city departments for on-street bicycle accommodation. This project will put bicycle lanes on Massachusetts Avenue from Lafayette Square to the Charles River.

1994

First applications for new members to the committee solicited, for a term of two year's duration.

January 1995

First "How to get around Cambridge" map released, including pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit information.

Summer 1995

Cambridge appoints its Pedestrian Advisory Committee, a counterpart to the Bicycle Committee.

October 1995

First bicycle lane installed on a Cambridge street.

1996

Request for new members to the Bicycle Committee is oversubscribed.

Spring 1997

Every Cambridge public school child attends a bicycle safety assembly or presentation given by Cambridge Police. Parents are required to sign a slip saying that their child has looked at the distributed safety information.

May 1997

Cambridge Police begin enforcement of newly-passed city ordinances designed to control bicycle riding on sidewalks in busy areas of the city, as well as the enforcement of other bicycle traffic laws.

September 1997

Newly redesigned Central Square opened with on-street bicycle lanes, many new bicycle parking spaces, and new pedestrian crossings.

Fall 1998

The League of American Bicyclists names Cambridge a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Cambridge tests painting bicycle lanes blue in high-conflict areas, based on traffic studies in US and European cities.

Cambridge distributes "Watch for Bikes" decals for driver's side mirrors with all new resident parking stickers.

Innovative city ordinances and regulations

Cambridge's Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance

Funds used to promote bicycling in Cambridge are derived primarily from the City's budget as dictated by the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance. Approved by City Council in 1992, the VTRO is one of Cambridge's means of complying with federal clean air regulations. It addresses a wide range of ways to reduce motor vehicle emissions within the City, including promoting bicycling, walking, and mass transit.

The VTRO called for, among other steps, the appointment of a permanent bicycle-pedestrian coordinator, the completion of bicycle and pedestrian master plans, funding for bicycle parking and "other amenities", and provisions for bicycles for city police and the department of traffic and parking. It also provided specific funding levels to pay for efforts that improve and encourage bicycling. Unique among local communities, the VTRO is the philosophical and financial lifeblood of Cambridge bicycle and pedestrian programs.

Zoning ordinances pertaining to bicycle parking

Cambridge is one of the first Massachusetts communities to create zoning regulations that dictate requirements for bicycle as well as automobile parking. These zoning ordinances may serve as an example for other communities establishing similar laws. The following section includes the sections of Cambridge zoning ordinances that relate to bicycle parking. *This information was collected and transcribed by Doug Mink, Bicycle Coalition of Massachusetts, January 1995.*

Intent

6.11 It is the intent of this Article 6.000 to reduce traffic congestion and thereby promote the safety and welfare of the republic, by establishing requirements for off-street parking and loading in conjunction with the use of land. The number of parking and loading spaces required herein varies according to type, location, and intensity of development in the different zoning districts, and to proximity of public transit facilities. This Article 6.000 requires development of adequate parking facilities to meet the reasonable needs of all building and land users without establishing regulations which unnecessarily encourage automobile usage. The parking standards contained herein are intended to encourage public transit, bicycle usage, and walking in lieu of automobiles where a choice of travel mode exists. It is also the purpose of this Article to allow flexibility in providing required parking through shared or off-site arrangements in order to accommodate the automobile in the urban environment in a less disruptive way. Development regulations and design standards have been established to reduce hazard to pedestrians on public sidewalks, to ensure the usefulness of parking and loading facilities, and where appropriate, to avoid potential adverse impacts on adjacent land uses and to enhance the visual quality of the city....

Use

6.21 All accessory parking facilities provided in accordance with this Article shall be maintained exclusively for the parking of motor vehicles or bicycles so long as the use exists which the facilities were designed to serve...

6.223 Accessory bicycle parking spaces required under the provisions of this Article 6.000 must be located in the same lot as the use being served or a contiguous lot in the same ownership.

Required Amount of Parking

6.31 Off-street parking facilities shall be provided for each use of a lot or structure in the amount specified in the schedule of parking requirements contained in subsection 6.36. Said schedule specifies the amount of accessory off-street parking required for each type of land use listed in Table of Use Regulations in this ordinance. The amount of required parking is also based on the intensity of development permitted in the district in which the use is located.

Bicycle Parking

6.37 Off-street parking of bicycles shall be provided as follows:

6.371 For multi-family residences there shall be one bicycle space or locker for each two dwelling units or portion thereof.

6.372 For all other uses, except those exempted in subsection 7.374, there shall be one bicycle parking space for each ten automobile parking spaces or fraction thereof required in subsection 6.36.

6.373 Uses allowed to have reduced parking by special permit under subsection 6.35 shall nevertheless be required to provide bicycle spaces in the amount of one for each ten automobile spaces or fraction thereof that would otherwise be required for such use in subsection 6.36.

6.374 No accessory bicycle parking shall be required to serve the following uses as listed in the Section 6.36. Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements: [Townhouse or elderly oriented housing, cemeteries, mortuaries, veterinary establishments, kennels, pet shops, distribution centers, auto body or paint shops, and automotive repair garages.]

6.443 Off-street parking facilities shall be marked so as to indicate clearly the space to be occupied by each vehicle, in accordance with subsection 6.42 and including directional arrows and traffic signs as necessary for traffic control. Such markings shall be maintained so as to be plainly visible.

Lighting

6.46 Off-street parking facilities which are used at night shall be provided with adequate lighting...

Design of Bicycle Parking Spaces

6.49 Bicycle parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with the amounts required by Section 6.37 and with the design regulations in this section 6.49.

6.491 Each bicycle parking space shall be sufficient to accommodate a bicycle at least six (6) feet in length and two feet wide, and shall be provided with some form of stable frame permanently anchored to a foundation to which a bicycle frame and both wheels may be conveniently secured using a chain and padlock, locker, or other storage facilities which are convenient for storage and are reasonably secure from theft and vandalism. The separation of the bicycle parking

spaces and the amount of corridor space shall be adequate for convenient access to every space when the parking facility is full.

6.492 When automobile parking spaces are provided in a structure, all required bicycle spaces shall be located inside that structure or shall be located in other areas protected from the weather. Bicycle parking spaces in parking structures shall be clearly marked as such and shall be separated from auto parking by some form of barrier to minimize the possibility of a parked bicycle being hit by a car.

6.493 Bicycle parking spaces shall be located near the entrance of use being served and within view of pedestrian traffic if possible, and shall be sufficiently secure to reasonably reduce the likelihood of bicycle theft.

6.494 Changes in the requirements of this section, consistent with the intent of this article may be approved by the Board of Zoning Appeal for an individual building by special permit.

6.51 Any application for a building permit for construction of a new building or for an alteration of an existing building increasing the gross floor area or intensity of use (as specified in subsection 6.21b), or for a certificate of occupancy where no building permit is required, shall be accompanied by one or more plans—drawn to scale and fully dimensioned—showing any parking and/or loading facilities to be provided.

6.52 Every such plan for a proposed new, altered, or expanded use which provides five or more parking spaces shall indicate thereon the location and provision for:

1. parking spaces and access routes (6.34 and 6.40)
2. curbing and wheel stops (6.442)
3. pavement markings (6.443)
4. surfacing (6.45)
5. screening and landscaping (6.47 and 6.48)
6. lighting (6.46)
7. drainage (6.45)
8. bicycle parking (6.49)
9. loading areas (6.60)
10. other pertinent data reasonably required by the Superintendent of Buildings or his designee.

Committee Bylaws (adopted September 1993)

I. Name

The name of the Committee shall be the Cambridge Bicycle Committee.

II. Purpose

The Committee was established by Cambridge City Council Order, adopted October 28, 1991. The Committee is organized to work to improve conditions for

bicycling in the City of Cambridge, to promote bicycling as a means of transportation, and to improve safety conditions for bicyclists.

III. Membership

The Cambridge Bicycle Committee shall be composed of citizens and city employees as follows:

Citizen Representatives

Citizen representatives must take an active interest in bicycling issues in Cambridge; preference will be given to those who live or work in Cambridge. Representatives will be appointed by the City Manager upon application; applications may be reviewed by the Cambridge Bicycle Committee Nominating Committee and the Bicycle Coordinator to forward recommendations to the City Manager, who will appoint members. Each member shall serve a two-year term, renewable at the discretion of the City Manager.

Departmental Representatives

Department Heads from the following City departments (or their designees) are automatically members of the bicycle committee: Department of Public Works, Department of Traffic and Parking, Police Department, Cambridge Environmental Program. Additional representatives from these departments may be appointed by Department Heads. Additional departments may be included.

Member responsibilities

- *Attendance:* Each member must notify the Chair or the Bicycle Coordinator if s/he will be absent; if the absence is for more than three consecutive meetings, the member must have an approved leave of absence in order to maintain membership.
- *Substantive Work:* Each member must have responsibility for one task area, project, or committee, which is part of the Committee work program.

IV. Officers

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary

Officers will be responsible for getting information to Committee members, writing Committee correspondence, and taking minutes of meetings. Officers will be elected on an annual basis each September, after the initial designation.

V. Votes/Quorum

- 7 members for quorum
- Majority votes; by-law changes require 2/3 vote
- Emergency actions require quorum (by meeting, fax, or phone) plus Bicycle Coordinator review

VI. Work Program

A work program for the Committee shall be established once/year (in September). Each member shall have responsibility for a task area, project or committee established in the Work Program.

